

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 30

47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2005

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY  
BASKETBALL COACH LOU HENSON.

WHEREAS, Lou Henson began his coaching career as the head basketball coach at Las Cruces high school in 1958, amassing a record of one hundred forty-five wins and twenty-three losses and leading his teams to the state championship in 1959, 1960 and 1961; and

WHEREAS, Coach Henson entered the collegiate coaching ranks in 1962 at Hardin-Simmons, where he began a forty-one year career that would take him to the university of Illinois and to New Mexico state university for two tours and would eventually make him the all-time sixth-winningest coach among national collegiate athletic association division I coaches; and

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1           WHEREAS, Coach Henson, whose approachable, gentlemanly  
2 style stood in marked contrast to many of his coaching  
3 colleagues, became affectionately and simply known as "Lou" to  
4 legions of fans at Illinois, where he coached for twenty-one  
5 seasons, and New Mexico state university, his alma mater; and

6           WHEREAS, Lou's career was punctuated by many highlights,  
7 including becoming only one of ten division I coaches to lead  
8 two schools to the national collegiate athletic association  
9 final four; becoming the all-time winningest coach at both  
10 Illinois and New Mexico state university; coaching his first  
11 Aggie team, known as the "Miracle Midgets" because no player  
12 stood taller than six feet, five inches, to a winning record a  
13 year after going just four wins and twenty-two losses; guiding  
14 the 1988-89 Illinois team to a number one national ranking, the  
15 last Illinois team to reach that mark until this year's team;  
16 and coaching what is considered to be the best Aggie team ever,  
17 the 1969-70 team led by Sam Lacey and Jimmy Collins, to a  
18 season record of twenty-seven wins and three losses; and

19           WHEREAS, his remarkable coaching talent and ability to  
20 inspire others to achieve beyond their dreams was never tested  
21 as much as it was in 2001, when he coached an overrated New  
22 Mexico house of representatives team to a narrow, overtime  
23 victory over an aging senate team; and

24           WHEREAS, Lou "retired" from coaching in 1996 and returned  
25 to Las Cruces with his wife, Mary, but quickly demonstrated his

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1 class, love for the game and loyalty to the fans and his alma  
2 mater by accepting for a second time the head coaching job at  
3 New Mexico state university for the salary of one dollar  
4 (\$1.00) a month; and

5 WHEREAS, Lou continued to coach the Aggies until  
6 persistent health problems prompted him to take himself out of  
7 the game, just a season or so away from becoming only the fifth  
8 coach in division I history to top eight hundred victories; and

9 WHEREAS, it is the sincere hope of the men and women of  
10 the New Mexico legislature that Coach Henson fully enjoy many  
11 hours each day with his loving wife, Mary; his daughters, Lori,  
12 Lisa and Leigh Anne; and his twelve grandchildren;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
14 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that hearty congratulations and sincere  
15 thanks be extended to Lou Henson for his career achievements  
16 and for his contributions to the game of basketball, the lives  
17 of thousands of young men, sports fans everywhere and the  
18 residents of the state of New Mexico; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
20 transmitted to Lou Henson.